

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 19, 2018
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Heather Chase; Dan Cote; Ben Whalen; Lee Gustafson;
David Pisha

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Lillian Willis; David Willis; Jeff Holden; Frank
Bidwell; Jill Bruning; John DesLauriers; Frederick Greenwell; Marilyn
Mahusky; Kelly Arrison; Graham Kennedy; Jeff Easter

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jonynas.

There were no additions to the agenda. Chief Cloud is not present tonight so he can be removed from the agenda.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2018 Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2018 Executive Session meeting. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were no citizen's comments.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Implementation Committee: David Pisha stated that the Implementation Committee continues meeting as well as the Economic Development Group also meets. This Economic Development group consists of Lee Whiting, Rick Paterno, Bob Flint, David Pisha and Julie Hance. The Implementation Committee has a meeting on October 2, 2018. Shawn Cunningham questioned the Economic Development group. David Pisha noted that it is a marketing group.

EMS: David Pisha stated that he spoke with Craig Jennings who will be in touch with the architect with updates, hopefully by the end of this week. Another meeting will be called once the revised material is received.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the ACT 250. David Pisha stated that he has spoken with Jim Goss and Naomi Johnson about the process. This process will be

starting soon with an estimated 9 month permitting process. It is possible that the town could be extracting gravel the summer of 2019.

4. APPROVE LOAN AGREEMENT; HIGHWAY TRUCK:

David Pisha stated that one of the town's 1 ton dump trucks needs to be replaced. Graham Kennedy has been looking around for a replacement. He has identified two vehicles, each being approximately \$35,000. David Pisha stated that he has reviewed the budget and cannot find an extra \$35,000. Therefore, he is suggesting that the town borrow the money from the Economic Development Fund and repay it over 3 years at a rate of 3.25%. This would require a pay back of \$13,000 per year.

Dan Cote questioned the use of the Economic Development Funds for this purpose. Arne Jonynas noted that these funds have been used this way in the past. The policy does allow for this. Graham Kennedy stated that the truck is used by the Cemetery Department every day. This truck, which has a modified body, is also used for the leaf pickup in town. Graham Kennedy stated that this truck is a 2003 and the engine failed. Mechanics will not work on this truck because the cost of repair is more than the truck is worth. Graham Kennedy also stated that the cost of replacing the one-ton trucks has increased so much that he would like to add them to the replacement schedule. He also emphasized that the smaller trucks are vital to the day to day operation of the Public Works Department. Otherwise, all trips, large or small, have to be done with a large dump truck. This truck is one of the main vehicles used by the Public Works Department.

Heather Chase questioned if there is a smaller amount that could be found in the budget and a smaller amount financed. Graham Kennedy stated that his budget is fairly tight this year due to culvert work that has been done. David Pisha reminded the Board that this is a good reason to establish a reserve fund, which should be done this year.

Ben Whalen stated that he has no problem with the purchase of the truck or paying from the Development Fund. He did state that he would like to see these smaller trucks added to the rotation schedule.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to loan the town \$35,000 for the purchase of a one-ton pickup truck for Public Works for a term of 1-3 years. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. Discussion ensued.

Heather Chase stated that she would like for the fund to be paid back in 2019. David Pisha stated that there may be surpluses this year to help pay for this and there may be additional funds achieved through the gravel extraction next year. Heather Chase stated that the financial advisors recommended that the fund be drawn at a lower percentage rate, which is why she would like it paid back sooner.

Dan Cote stated that this is the only financing solution that has been presented to the Board. David Pisha stated that the bank could finance the purchase as well. Arne

Jonynas indicated that the town could benefit from the interest rate that would be paid back. Heather Chase stated that she wants to make sure that the loan is paid back in one year. Ben Whalen indicated that he does not want to commit to paying off the loan in one year since the budget is not known for next year. Dan Cote stated that he has no objections to the purchase of the truck. However, he feels that there are issues with the funding of the truck.

The Board voted in favor of the motion with Heather Chase and Dan Cote voting in the negative.

Frank Bidwell asked if the town has looked into purchasing a basic pickup truck for running errands. Graham Kennedy stated that the town does have a pickup that is used for running around. This one ton truck is used for jobs that require a small dump body.

5. YOSEMITE UPDATE:

Lillian Willis was present from the Chester Historic Preservation Committee. Arne Jonynas stated the idea of making the committee official was simply for the purpose of making the process easier for the public. Lee Gustafson questioned if the use of town funds requires an open meeting process. Heather Chase asked if VLCT could be contacted with these questions and would like to know if there is law that governs this.

Lee Gustafson questioned why becoming an official committee would be a problem. Lillian Willis stated that members feel that it adds a layer of red tape and would require more time. She also noted that this project would follow the same process as was used for the Hearse House. In that project, all actions and monies were approved by the town. She stated that this committee is advisory only. Lillian Willis stated that the rules around the open meeting laws are cumbersome when all actions taken are approved by the town. She further clarified that the meetings are open to the public on the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at Newsbank. Heather Chase agreed but would like to make sure that an official committee is not required. David Pisha will contact VLCT.

The Selectboard called Devan Coleman from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. Devan Coleman stated that he has viewed the property and is supportive of its renovations.

Dan Cote asked for Mr. Coleman's initial perspective on the value of restoration of the building. Mr. Coleman stated that he believes that the fire house has been fairly well maintained compared to other historic buildings that he has seen. He also stated that he feels the building is a great piece of Chester that should be restored.

Arne Jonynas questioned if there are other fire houses in the State. Mr. Coleman stated that he is not aware of any others still owned by the town, especially with all of the original equipment stored in the building.

Devan Coleman reminded the Board that not everything has to be done at one time. This should be phased project. The Board discussed the renovations that are anticipated in 2018 and 2019.

Dan Cote questioned the role between Devan Coleman and the town. Mr. Coleman stated that his direct role will be the National Register process. Caitlin Corkins manages the grants and the town will work with her during this process.

Lee Gustafson questioned the National Registry and the limitations it may create on the use of the building. Devan Coleman stated that the National Registry is an honorific designation that identifies and records the history of the building. It is based on nominations. He further stated that being listed in the National Register itself does not place any restrictions on the use of the building, as it is not regulatory. Devan Coleman also clarified that it would not prevent the building from being moved. When the town receives state and federal funding is when restrictions begin. Arne Jonynas asked if the relocation of the building would limit funding opportunities. Devan Coleman stated that it is a valid question for this building since it is situated in a tight location. When the building is relocated across town, it loses its historic context. If the building is relocated 100 feet away, then the historic context could likely remain.

Lillian Willis provided David Pisha with a summary of the meeting with Devan Coleman and Caitlin Corkins.

Heather Chase thanked everybody for their work getting the Yosemite Fire House to this point. Arne Jonynas also thanked the Chester Historical Society for their years of maintenance that they performed on this building.

6. TWO RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUEST:

Marilyn Mahusky was present as the Chair of the GMUSD Board. She explained the issues that have arisen at Chester Andover Elementary School due to the flooding at the school. Very quickly, grades 2-6 were relocated to the High School and grades K-1 went to the Baptist Church. After historic mold was identified in the Church, grades K-1 were moved to the High School as well. Marilyn Mahusky thanked everybody in the community for the work that has been done to date.

Marilyn Mahusky also expressed some concerns. She stated that Meg Powden and herself met with David Pisha and Jeff Holden last week. Marilyn Mahusky stated that there were concerns expressed that the pipes going into the school were too small once the town upgraded its lines to an 8". She indicated that the current board was not aware that there was an issue. However, she stated that the town was aware there was an issue with this pipe being too small, but the school was never identified. A report was issued by Dufresne Group in 2015 to the town and should have been provided to the school board as well.

Marilyn Mahusky also stated that when the concerns were brought to the Town Manager, she felt that the concerns were dismissed. She stated this is a small community and the town should work better with the schools.

Marilyn Mahusky stated that the cost of doing the work now is not much more than it would have been if done earlier. The cost has come in at \$81,500. She stated that there are some emergency funds that will help pay for this, as well as contingency funds that the school has in place. The cost to the taxpayer should be relatively small. The work will begin on Sunday. They are waiting on the electrical engineering bids to come in next week. There are boilers to be replaced, the electrical panel needs to be replaced, damage to the 5th and 6th grade classrooms that needs to be fixed and some foundation work will be done. This is expected to be paid for by the insurance company. The goal is to open the school before Thanksgiving.

Ben Whalen stated that the hydrant at the Elementary school has not worked for at least 18 years. He agreed that maybe there is a lapse in communication, but he feels that this project was kicked down the road until the project was forgotten. Ben Whalen stated that Jim Spaulding indicated to him that he was aware of the issue. Marilyn Mahusky also suggested that the other properties on the list be identified as well.

Marilyn Mahusky stated that the question is if the new water line created the issue at the school. Arne Jonynas stated that there was no boost in the pressure with the new line. The issue was due to the old pipe and the material that the pipe was made of. He also stated that this was an issue back when he was on the Board. Arne Jonynas stated that he feels that there is blame to be shared by everybody. Marilyn Mahusky stated that her goal is not to lay blame, but that when there are concerns expressed that the citizens feel as though they have been heard.

Heather Chase suggested that the town and the schools get together annually to share things that are going on. Marilyn Mahusky stated that one positive thing to come from the meeting is that the school administration will be meeting with the Town Manager in the very near future.

Jill Bruning stated that the trench work will happen quickly. The electrical work will take approximately 6 weeks. She also stated that the fire hydrant will be part of this project as well. Jill Bruning suggested that there be a point person on the Selectboard and the School Board to help bridge any gaps.

7. POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

This item was moved to a future meeting.

8. WATER DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Jeff Holden stated that he is here to answer any questions that the Board may have. He stated that he has spoken with M&M Excavating and the work will begin Sunday and is

expected to be completed in 2 weeks. He also stated that there are two hydrants being added to the school property. Jeff Holden stated that the reason for the upgrading to 8" is because the fire marshal requires it and because it will provide better fire protection.

Lee Gustafson asked for Jeff Holden to explain the new project at the school. Jeff Holden stated that the pipe will be Class 52 ductile iron. He further stated that M&M is a good firm that does quality work. The 8" line will run to a hydrant just outside of the building where the pipe size will be reduced. It has not yet been determined the size going into the building. Jeff Holden explained the difference between cast iron and ductile iron piping.

Jeff Holden told the Board that the new system is operating very well. There have been two issues in town that, on the old system, would have required the entire system to be shut down. These breaks were fixed with very little impact.

Jeff Holden also discussed the issues with the pump station at the High School. He told the Board that the cost of a pump station for the town is around \$100,000. The Board mentioned to Marilyn Mahusky that this should be addressed by the school board. Jeff Holden told Marilyn Mahusky that this issue has been known for at least 10 years and there is no way of knowing when it will fail.

The Board discussed the ways that Chester's pure water could be used as an economic benefit. Jeff Holden stated that this was looked at several years ago. He stated that while Chester does have pure water, it can be stressed easily which can cause issue with the quality. Jeff Holden stated that he is trying to install a system at the Wastewater Plant that will use the effluent water to clean the screens instead of potable water.

Jeff Holden addressed the thought of a brewery in town. He stated that it could happen, but a pretreatment facility would be a requirement. Chester's Wastewater Plant cannot handle the BODs that would come from a brewery. Dan Cote stated that he does not believe that to be an unrealistic expectation. Dan Cote also asked for clarification on the water system's recovery abilities. Jeff Holden stated that recovery is okay for our usage, but a larger draw could create issues.

Heather Chase questioned how Chester compares to other communities with its water and wastewater capacity. Jeff Holden stated that Chester is unique because we only have one main water source. Other towns have multiple smaller wells. Lee Gustafson asked if we have ever checked into a separate source of water for the town. Jeff Holden suggested that some money be set aside to investigate other sources of water. Lee Gustafson noted that the town can find water. The expense will be in treating the new water source. He questioned what it would take to provide a million gallons of water a day to a new business – what will it take to be competitive with other towns? Lee Gustafson mentioned that there may be a way to deepen the Jeffrey Well.

Dan Cote stated that he feels that Chester has a jewel with its water. He suggested that there may be other processors who would like to come to Chester. He suggested that

some money be spent to evaluate the water that is available to Chester. Jeff Holden expressed his concerns that the existing water supply not be overtaxed at the Jeffrey Well location.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the Canal Street Well. Jeff Holden indicated that that it is an emergency backup site only. He stated that the State will not allow him to change the status of this well. Jeff Holden also stated that he would like to be able to exercise the well. Lee Gustafson suggested that a Selectboard member call the State and see what it is needed. He also requested that the report of the water supply be located and provided to the Board.

Frank Bidwell questioned who would be paying for a project of this size. He argued that the water/sewer users not be taxed with this burden alone. He also stated that the cost of upgrading our systems to bring in users may not be feasible. The Board responded that the Board is taking a more visionary goal and doing some research into what might be available.

9. CATERING LICENSE APPROVAL:

The Board reviewed the liquor catering licenses for the Stone Hearth Inn and Mr. Darcy's dinner train service. It was noted that the Selectboard does not approve these licenses. Lee Gustafson expressed a concern that individuals not be walking around The Green with alcohol. The Board discussed that outside consumption requires an identified area.

Arne Jonynas reminded everybody about the Community Forest presentation that will be taking place tomorrow at 6:30 here at Town Hall.

Arne Jonynas suggested that there be an agenda item for Board comments that follows the Citizen's comments. Lee Gustafson stated that he has spoken with Rotary members about the future of the Fall Festival. He suggested to Nancy Davis that they let the town know if there is a way that the town can help out. David Pisha stated that this discussion has been taking place in the Town Manager's office for a few weeks. He stated that he will be presenting a procedural outline for future events to the Board in the near future.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION; US CELLULAR:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to find that the public disclosure of contract negotiations regarding the addition of Sprint and US Cellular to the cell tower will necessarily involve communications of and relating to the specific terms of said contract, disclosure of which could place the Town of Chester at a substantial disadvantage in any further negotiations. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to enter executive session, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) for the purposes of negotiating and reviewing the terms of contracts with Sprint and US Cellular. I further move that the Selectboard finds that the public

disclosure of the negotiations could place the town at a disadvantage. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:53 p.m.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to exit Executive session at 9:22 p.m.. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: TOWN MANAGER REVIEW

A motion was made by Heather Chase to enter Executive Session for the purposes of conducting a review of the Town Manager. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:22 p.m.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to exit Executive session at 10:04 p.m.. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

12. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to adjourn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Selectboard